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RAICHT ★ HOWARD ★ DANIEL ★ HARRISON
WILD BLUE YONDER

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Thank you all so much for picking up our first issue of Wild Blue Yonder. We can't express how excited we are for the book to be on the stands and in your hands. You've spent your hard earned money on us and we hope it was worth every penny. We are pushing to get better with each issue. Every one of you is a huge part of this book's success, so thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

We also need to thank Chris Ryall, Bobby Curnow, and the rest of the IDW gang for working so hard with us to make this book a reality. That thanks goes double to colorist supreme, Nelson Daniel, who has provided killer digital painting page after page. Our last bit of appreciation (and it is a large bit) goes out to the retailers who gave us a shot and who drive this industry by backing what they love. We know how hard it is to make choices every month on what to have on your comic book shelves. We are honored to be a part of your store.

Our goal from the very beginning of our partnership has been to deliver the coolest, most true experience of your comic book lives. At the very least, we'd like to climb to the top spot of your weekly must read Wednesday new comic day pile. Lofty goals in both cases, but it's the truth. If we fulfilled that goal, let your local retailer know. Let your comic reading buddies know. Tell your mom! Spreading the word is a huge deal in this industry and with a creator owned book like ours every single sale is a victory. That's what makes it so cool. You are part of choosing what books will last. We hope you feel Wild Blue is one of those books.

Finally, we'd love to hear from you. If you love the book let us know. Hate the Judge and feel he is not a very nice man and shouldn't shove broken glass into people's stomachs? Feel free to vent your rage! If you think Critter and his goggles are the bee's knees, shout it to the roof tops. The bottom line is we just want to hear from you. Drop us a line at CONTACT@NOBLETRANSMISSION.COM and maybe your message will show up in an upcoming issue of Wild Blue.

Now, back to work for us. See you next month.

Mike, Zach and Austin
Co-founders of Noble Transmission

THE WORLD WAS DYING.
RADIATION AND POLLUTION CONSUMED THE EARTH.
TO SURVIVE, ONE HAD TO MOVE EVER HIGHER INTO THE SKIES.
GIANT AIRCRAFT WERE BUILT, HOMES FOR THE CHOSEN FEW.
PEOPLE LEFT BEHIND LABOR IN MINES TO SUPPLY ENERGY TO THOSE FAR ABOVE, DREAMING THAT THEY TOO WILL ONE DAY BE RESCUED FROM DEATH AND DECAY.

LIFE IN THE SKY IS A BRUTAL WAR FOR SURVIVAL.
PILOTS AND JETPACK WARRIORS DESPERATELY FIGHT TO PROTECT THEIR OWN.
ONE FLEET SOON DOMINATES THE WILD BLUE.
COMMANDED BY THE JUDGE, THEY TAKE WHAT THEY NEED.
THE FITTEST SHALL SURVIVE.
THERE ARE THOSE WHO WHISPER OF ONE SHIP THAT NEVER REFUELS. A CRAFT THAT LIVES ON THE BEAMS OF SUNLIGHT HIGH ABOVE THE CLOUDS.
IT IS *THE DAWN.*
AND ALL IN THE SKY WOULD KILL TO POSSESS IT...

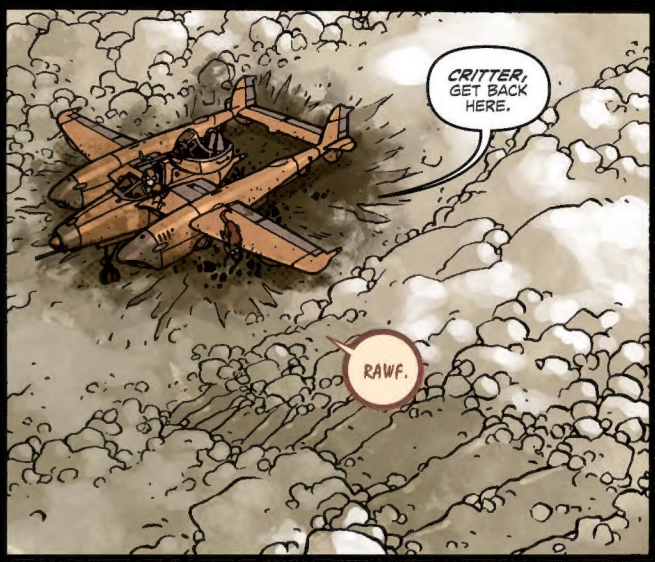
THE PEAK.

"LOCAL" BAR.

BEST WHISKEY ON THE PLANET.

PERHAPS BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY PLACE *LEFT* THAT *SERVES* WHISKEY.

CHAPTER ONE



COLA!
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU,
BUT YOU KNOW DAMN WELL THAT MUTT CAN'T SET FOOT IN THIS PLACE.
CARTER, HE'S HARMLESS.

THIS PLACE HAS A CERTAIN REPUTATION TO UPHOLD, DARLIN'.
SERVE YOUR DOG AND EVERYONE WILL START BRINGING THEIR FURRY CO-PILOTS AND WHAT-NOT IN HERE.

I'M SURE NONE OF THESE FINE GENTLEMEN WILL BLAB ABOUT IT, RIGHT?

SO, COLA--
--WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU TODAY?
WE NEED A GUN TYPE.
NOT A SOCIAL VISIT, HUH? WHO WAS IT?
NOT SCRAM, I'M HOPIN'?
LUCY.
I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT.
USUAL PIRATING FRACAS OR--
NO, IT'S THE JUDGE AND HIS FLEET.
SORRIER TO HEAR THAT.
YOU GET A LOOK AT THE BIG SHIP?
THE EXECU-TIONER.
IF WE HAD, DO YOU THINK I'D BE STANDING HERE?
GUESS NOT.
AS FOR OUR NEW CREW-MATE, WE'RE OFFERING THE USUAL.
HOME.
FOOD.
FAMILY.
DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ANYONE HERE FITS THE BILL. I WAS HOPING I'D CATCH A MINING COLONY ON LEAVE OR SOMETHING.
WE'RE ONLY HOVERING FOR A BIT. MOM IS ANTSIER THAN EVER.
CAN'T SAY I BLAME HER. THE JUDGE IS NOT ONE YOU MESS WITH.
WELL, IF ANYONE IS INTERESTED, TELL THEM TO SIT TIGHT. WE'LL BE BACK THROUGH. NOT SURE WHEN.
COLA, WAIT...

YA KNOW, I'VE GOT A KID...
...MIGHT BE OF USE TO YOU.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?
NOTHING.
WHY IS HE HERE?
CAME IN WITH AN OUT-OF-WORK MINING CREW A WEEK AGO. DIDN'T LEAVE WITH THEM.
HE'S BEEN STAYING IN THE BACK. MOSTLY JUST SHOVELING THE LANDING AREA EVERY DAY FOR ROOM AND BOARD.
REGARDLESS, HE SAID HE WANTED A CHANGE IN SCENERY.
AND I SAID I WANTED A GUN.
NOT SOME KID WHO CAN SHOVEL SNOW.
ANOTHER!
I'M COMIN'. I'M COMIN'...
SUIT Y'SELF, COLA.
COLA
BUT IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, LUCY WAS OF THE MINING STOCK, WASN'T HE?
YEAH.
THAT HE WAS.
IT'S AMAZING WHAT SOME PEOPLE CAN ACCOMPLISH WHEN THEY'VE GOT NOTHIN' LEFT TO LOSE.

HEY.
YOU AWAKE?
BARELY.
I JUST SHOVELED THE LANDING STRIP SO YOU COULD GET YOUR WHISKEY; SO I'D LIKE TO GET SOME SLEEP IF YOU DON'T MIND.
I'M NOT LOOKING FOR A GOOD TIME OR IN FINDING OUT HOW OLD LOVIN' IS THE BEST.
OH.
HI.
NAME'S COLA.
I'M STONE SOBER AND I'M NOT INTO OLD LOVIN'.
BUT I AM LOOKING FOR SOMEONE INTERESTED IN JOINING A CREW ABOVE THE CLOUD LINE.
THE BARTENDER SAID YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED?
HE DID?
I MEAN, OF COURSE.
WHO WOULDN'T BE?
WHAT TYPE OF WORK?
IF I TOLD YOU, YOU PROBABLY WOULDN'T COME.
IT'S A ONE-WAY TRIP AND A ONE-PERSON OFFER.
SO IF YOU HAVE ANY FAMILY YOU WANT US TO PICK UP, IT'S NOT HAPPENING.

NO FAMILY LEFT. IT'S JUST ME.
LET'S GET MOVING THEN.
WAIT.
HOW DO I KNOW YOU AND YOUR CREW AREN'T GOING TO EAT ME OR SOMETHING?
I CAN PROMISE YOU WE'RE NOT CANNIBALS.
I'LL FILL YOU IN ON THE TRIP, BUT WE NEED TO MOVE.
GRAB YOUR STUFF AND LET'S GO.
I'VE GOT ALL I NEED ON ME, BUT I'D LIKE TO KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT WHAT I'M GETTING INTO.
THROW ME A BONE, HERE.
AN OFFER LIKE THIS DOESN'T DROP OUT OF THE SKY EVERY DAY, KID.
DON'T BLOW IT.
IS THIS FOR REAL?
YOU TAKE CARE, BOY.
AND REMEMBER IT WAS OL' CARTER THAT HELPED YA.
I WILL.

WAIT UP!
I DIDN'T CATCH THE NAME OF YOUR RIDE.
GRRRRRRR...
WHAT THE HELL?
SNORT!
THIS IS CRITTER.
HE DOESN'T LIKE ANYONE MUCH.
ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE ABOUT TO TAKE HIS SEAT.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, BOY?
HEY, CRITTER. I'M TUG. NICE TO MEET YOU.
RRRRRT...
CRIPES!
CHOMP
HE'S JUST MAD HE COULDN'T COME IN THE BAR.
SURE.
NOT CANNIBALS BUT THEY DO HAVE A MAN-EATING DOG.
PERFECT.

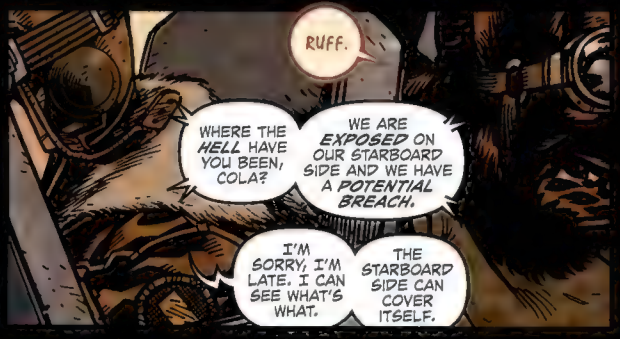
SO, YOU SAID YOU HAD NO FAMILY. WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?
I NEVER KNEW MY MOM.
MY DAD DIED WHEN I WAS TWELVE IN A MINE ACCIDENT.
CAVE-IN?
YEAH. HE WAS AN ENGINEER.
DURING THE CAVE-IN AN OLD ELEVATOR BLEW A COG.
TRAPPED A WHOLE CREW DOWN THERE.
THEY WERE AS GOOD AS DEAD.
I REMEMBER THE ALARM BELL CLANGING. DAD SAT ME ON AN OLD RUSTED OUT DIGGER AND TOLD ME HE'D BE RIGHT BACK-- HE HAD TO DO SOMETHING.
WHAT DID HE DO?
HE WENT IN...
LOTS OF OTHER PEOPLE CAME OUT.
NOT DAD, THOUGH.
STRAIGHT SHOOTING, HERE. MY FREIGHTER LOST A GUN. SO WE NEED A NEW ONE.
THINGS HAVE GOTTEN A LITTLE INTENSE LATELY BUT WE CAN GIVE YOU A PLACE TO LIVE AND FIGHT FOR.
AND A FAMILY.
I UNDERSTAND IF YOU DON'T COME.
IF NOT, HOPEFULLY WE'LL BE BACK IN A FEW YEARS.
MAYBE BY THEN I'LL BE LOOKING FOR SOME OF THAT OLD LOVIN', TOO.
GRRRR
...I'M IN.
BUT THE DOG MOVES UP FRONT WITH YOU.
NOT A PROBLEM.
YOU'LL LEARN TO LOVE HIM.

YOU MIC'D IN YET?
I THINK. CAN YOU HEAR ME?
YEP. WE'LL BE IN TRANSIT FOR A BIT, AND WE CAN GET YOU UP TO SPEED.
YEAH. WE DO. JUST A FEW MILES, HOVERING LOW OVER A RAD LAKEBED.
SO HOW FAR AWAY IS YOUR FREIGHTER?
YOU DO HAVE A FREIGHTER, RIGHT?
A RAD LAKE?
SERIOUSLY?
YOU GUYS MUST BE ON THE RUN FROM SOMETHING PRETTY INTENSE.
YOU COULD SAY THAT. HANG TIGHT.
WHOA!
I LOVED THAT HAT.
I...UH... HAVEN'T BEEN THIS LOW IN YEARS.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE A MINER.
WELL, YEAH. SURE. BUT WE MINED A LITTLE HIGHER UP IN THE--
FWIP! FWIP! FWIP!
WHAT WAS THAT?
TRACERS.
MEANS THEY'VE FOUND US.
ONLY A FEW SQUADS STILL HAVE AMMO.
THE JUDGE'S WRAITHS.
BRACE YOURSELF.

SO IT IS REAL...
NOT FOR LONG IF WE DON'T GET IN THE FIGHT.

GET ON THE TURRET.
QUICK PULLS.
WE'VE ONLY GOT ABOUT 25 ROUNDS IN THERE.
ONLY FIRE IF YOU'RE SURE.

THE BLACK SHIPS ARE THE BAD GUYS.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE JETPACKERS, THEY'RE TOO SMALL TO HIT.
OUR GUYS WILL TAKE CARE OF THEM, RIGHT, CRITTER?

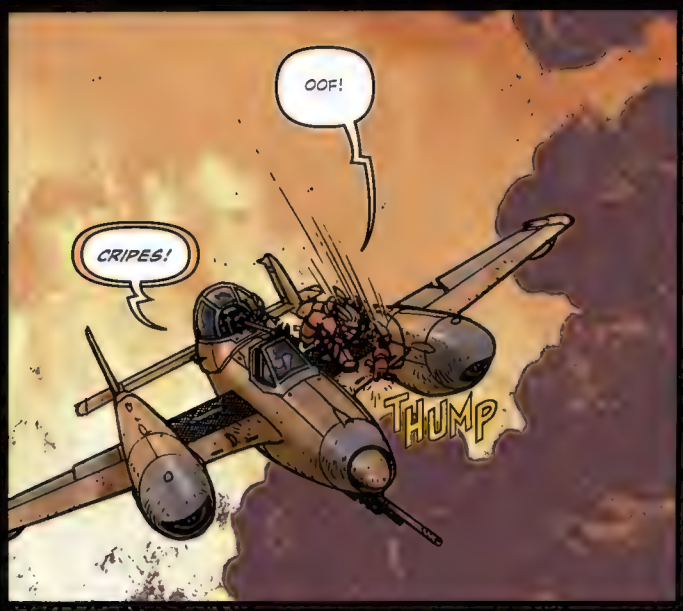

RUFF.
WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN, COLA?
WE ARE EXPOSED ON OUR STARBOARD SIDE AND WE HAVE A POTENTIAL BREACH.
I'M SORRY, I'M LATE. I CAN SEE WHAT'S WHAT.
THE STARBOARD SIDE CAN COVER ITSELF.

NO IT CAN'T. I NEED YOU TO--
BRICK IS IN TROUBLE. IF I CAN KEEP HIM CLEAR WE CAN--
ENOUGH!
DO AS I SAY. NOW!

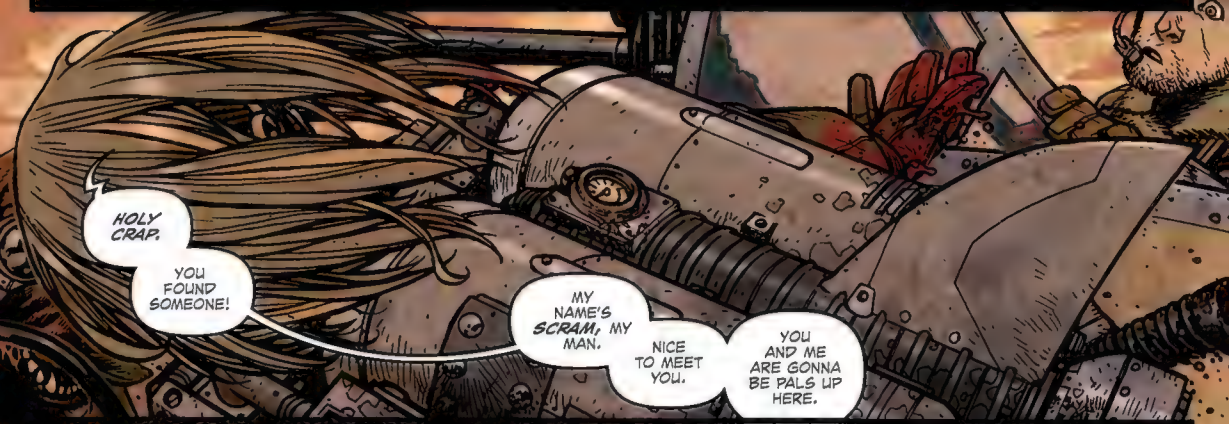
OH, FORGET IT.
mothership
MAIN
CLICK

HOLD ON BACK THERE.
FIRE AT ANYTHING COMING FROM THE BACK OR SIDES.

BRICK WILL ROLL LEFT HERE, RIGHT, CRITTER?
LOTS OF FREE AIRSPACE AWAY FROM THE DAWN THERE.
WE JUST HAVE TO...
...BE THERE WHEN HE DOES.
whirrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
BUDDABUDDABUDDABUDDA


OOF!
CRIPES!
THUMP

THAT GUY JUST WOULDN'T DIE.


HOLY CRAP.
YOU FOUND SOMEONE!
MY NAME'S SCRAM, MY MAN.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
YOU AND ME ARE GONNA BE PALS UP HERE.

TUG.
GOOD, SOLID NAME.

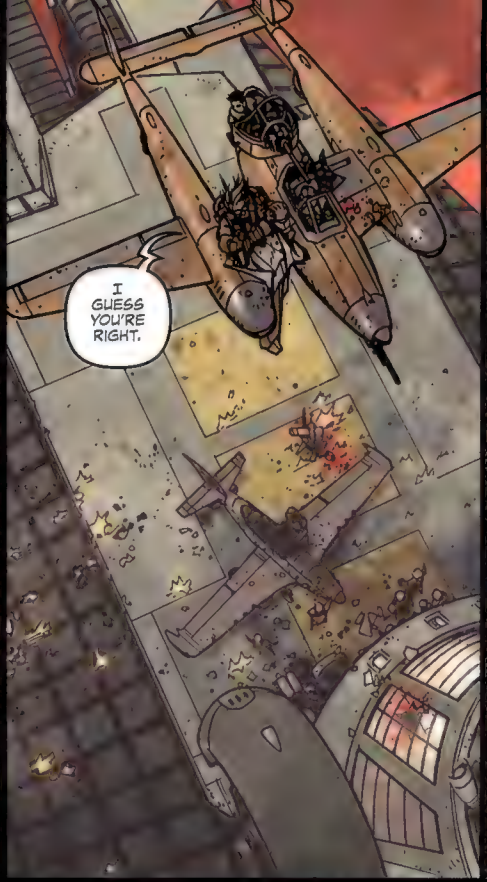
HEY, SCRAM, INTROS CAN WAIT. HOW MUCH YOU HAVE LEFT IN THAT PACK?
PROBABLY 15 SECONDS' WORTH.
UH, YOUR MOM IS YELLING PRETTY LOUD ON THE RADIO.
I THINK AT YOU.
SHE SAYS LACE NEEDS HELP ON THE HULL.

GOT IT.
I'LL GET YOU CLOSE THEN.
COOL.

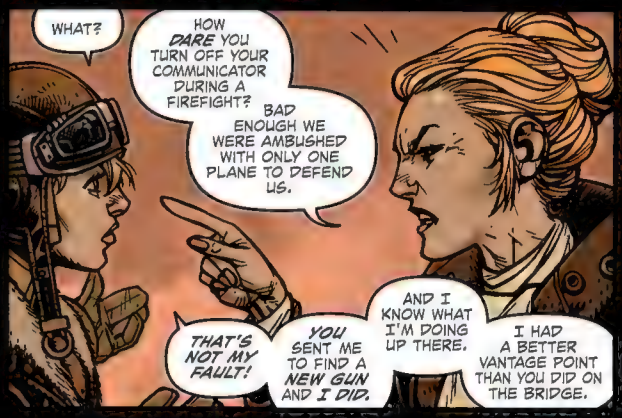
RIDE'S OVER.
HACK HACK HACK
NICE TO MEET YOU, TUG.
THUCK!

UNFH!
COME ON, YOU STUPID AXE.
VVVVVVVVVVVV VVVVVVVVVVVVV VVVVVVVVVVVV
AWW, CRAP.
VVVOOOOSH!
...THESE PEOPLE ARE NUTS.
HEY!
WAKE UP. WE'VE GOT A BOGEY COMING.
USE THE FLOOR PEDALS TO SWING LEFT.
whirrrrrrrrrrrr
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE LEAVING. CAN'T HAVE THAT. REMEMBER, TWO QUICK PULLS, TUG.
DO IT NOW, TUG.
FIRE!
BUDDABUDDABUDDABUDDA
THAT'S ENOUGH!
YOU'RE WASTING AMMO.

SORRY ABOUT THAT. I--
NO WORRIES. FIRST TIME AND ALL.
YEAH.
OH, MAN. SCRAM IS FALLING.
WHAT?
FALLING?
HOW WILL WE CATCH HIM?
PARACHUTE. AS LONG AS HE DOESN'T GET TOO CLOSE TO THE RAD LAKE, HE'LL BE OKAY.
I KNOW, I KNOW. MY AXE GOT STUCK IN THAT DUDE'S HEAD.
ARE YOU CRAZY?
I'LL BE DAMNED IF I LOSE MY FAVORITE AXE, COLA.
WHERE'S BRICK?
HIS PLANE GOT DUSTED A BIT. HE'S ALREADY LANDED.
IS HE OKAY?
YEAH, BUT OLIVIA IS GOING TO KILL YOU WHEN YOU LAND.
WHAT'S SHE HAVE TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THIS TIME?
WE WON, DIDN'T WE?


I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO WASH THE TOP OF THIS PLANE, SCRAM. IT'S DISGUSTING.
UM, COLA, YOU'RE, UH... THE CAPTAIN'S COMING.
COLA!

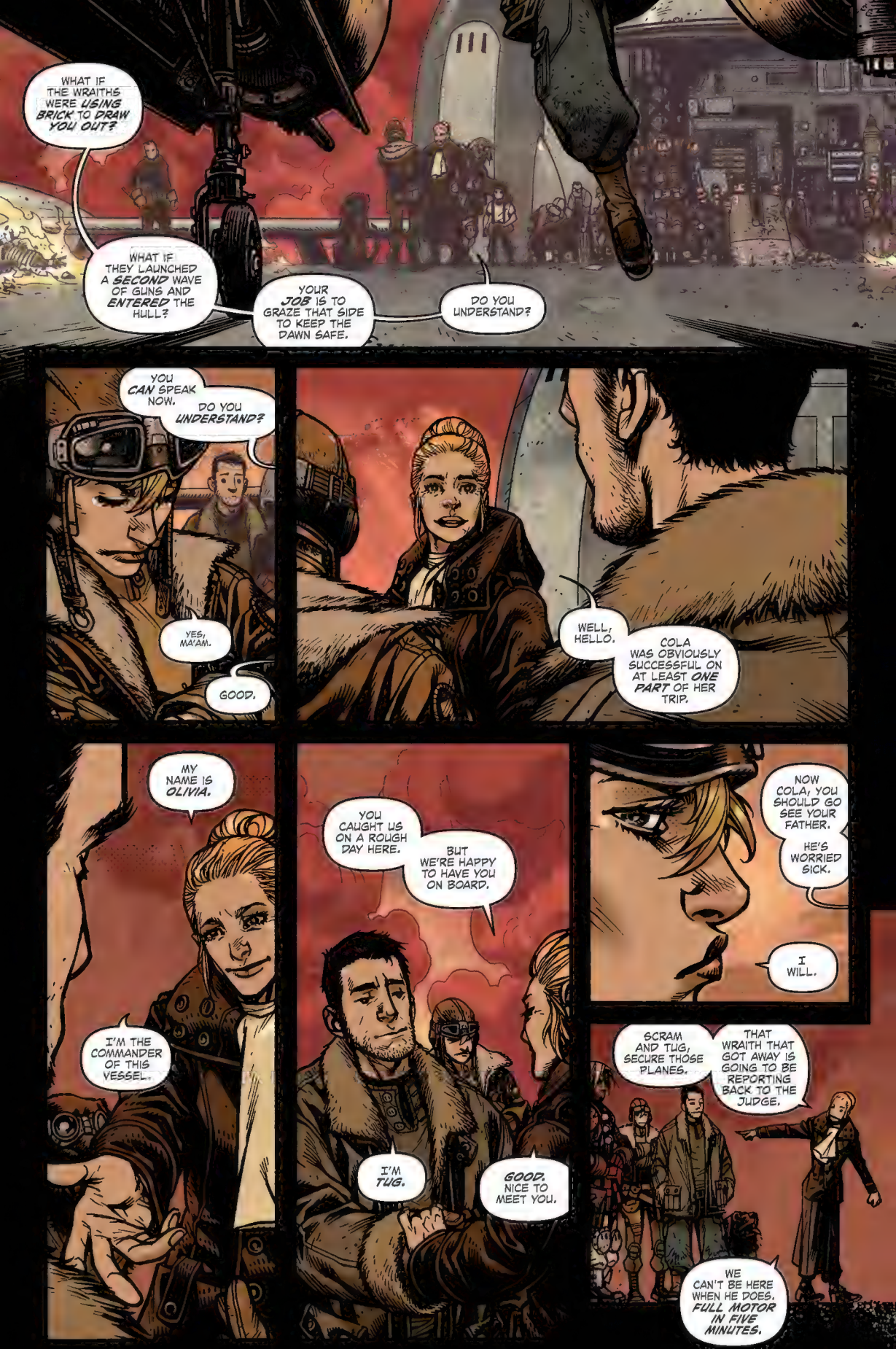

WHAT?
HOW DARE YOU TURN OFF YOUR COMMUNICATOR DURING A FIREFIGHT?
BAD ENOUGH WE WERE AMBUSHED WITH ONLY ONE PLANE TO DEFEND US.
THAT'S NOT MY FAULT!
YOU SENT ME TO FIND A NEW GUN AND I DID.
AND I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING UP THERE.
I HAD A BETTER VANTAGE POINT THAN YOU DID ON THE BRIDGE.

ENOUGH!
I WILL PERMANENTLY GROUND YOU, COLA, IF YOU SAY ONE. MORE. WORD.

DID YOU KNOW THAT OUR RIGHT SIDE WAS EXPOSED?

THAT WE WERE HURT AND VULNERABLE?

OF COURSE NOT!
YOU DON'T LISTEN TO ME.


WHAT IF THE WRAITHS WERE USING BRICK TO DRAW YOU OUT?
WHAT IF THEY LAUNCHED A SECOND WAVE OF GUNS AND ENTERED THE HULL?
YOUR JOB IS TO GRAZE THAT SIDE TO KEEP THE DAWN SAFE.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
YOU CAN SPEAK NOW.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
YES, MA'AM.
GOOD.
WELL, HELLO.
COLA WAS OBVIOUSLY SUCCESSFUL ON AT LEAST ONE PART OF HER TRIP.
MY NAME IS OLIVIA.
I'M THE COMMANDER OF THIS VESSEL.
YOU CAUGHT US ON A ROUGH DAY HERE.
BUT WE'RE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU ON BOARD.
I'M TUG.
GOOD. NICE TO MEET YOU.
NOW COLA, YOU SHOULD GO SEE YOUR FATHER.
HE'S WORRIED SICK.
I WILL.
SCRAM AND TUG, SECURE THOSE PLANES.
THAT WRAITH THAT GOT AWAY IS GOING TO BE REPORTING BACK TO THE JUDGE.
WE CAN'T BE HERE WHEN HE DOES. FULL MOTOR IN FIVE MINUTES.

DON'T TAKE IT TO HEART. SHE'S JUST WORRIED ABOUT YOU, COLA.
WE ALL ARE, WITH THE CHANCES YOU TAKE SOME TIMES.
LUCY WASN'T MY FAULT, SCRAM. HE...
I KNOW THAT.
WE ALL DO.
YEAH. WE DID GOOD.
I'M GOING TO SEE MY DAD.
YOU TOOK GOOD CARE OF ME TODAY, RIGHT?
AND YOU SAVED BRICK.
WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?
OH, THAT?
JUST MOTHER-DAUGHTER STUFF.
AND LUCY WAS COLA'S FIRST GUN.
WE LOST HIM LAST WEEK. IT WAS TOUGH ON COLA.
SHE CAN BE A BIT WILD AT TIMES BUT SHE'S ONE OF THE BEST PILOTS WE'VE HAD.
HER AND BRICK.
GOOD PEOPLE.
SO THEY WANT ME TO DO WHAT YOU DO?
THERE'S NO WAY...
YOU'LL PICK IT UP QUICK. I PROMISE YOU.
JUST WAIT UNTIL YOU GET ONE OF THESE ROCKET PACKS STRAPPED TO YOU.
IT'S A FREAKIN' RUSH.

NOW HELP ME SECURE THIS PUPPY.
WE'RE GONNA BURN FAST TONIGHT.
WITH THE JUDGE ON OUR TAIL, IT'S BEEN A BIT ROUGH LATELY.
I CAN SEE YOU'RE FREAKING. DON'T. IT'S NOT THIS BAD EVERY DAY.
WELL, IT HAS BEEN LATELY, BUT THINGS WILL COOL OFF.
HEY, I ALMOST FORGOT.
WELCOME TO THE DAWN, MAN.
YOU'RE PART OF THE FAMILY NOW.
CONGRATS.
THANKS.
I GUESS.

JUDGE, A LONE WRAITH FIGHTER IS RETURNING FROM THE EAST.
I'M ASSUMING TANGO SQUAD.
AT LEAST WHAT'S LEFT OF IT... IT APPEARS TO BE WRAITH 9.
LIEUTENANT RYALL SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY SURVIVOR.
WE INQUIRED ABOUT THE REST OF HIS SQUAD BUT HE IS NOT VERY HOPEFUL ABOUT THEIR SURVIVAL.
HE SAYS THEY SPOTTED THE DAWN AND ENGAGED--

I CAN SEE THAT, LODGE.
I KNOW EVERY WRAITH THAT LEAVES OUR DOCKS.
QUIET.
HAVE HIM LAND ON THE EXECUTIONER.
I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK WITH THE PILOT IN PRIVATE.
AND PLEASE SEND FOR DR. STEPHENS.
SEND HER TO MY QUARTERS.
CLICK
VRRRRT
CLICK
VRRRRT

COME IN, CAPTAIN.
DID YOU SEE IT?
WAS IT THE DAWN?
I BELIEVE SO, SIR.
I SAW THE SUN GLEAMING OFF OF HER HULL LIKE YOU SAID I WOULD.
HUGE SILVER--
WHERE?
QUADRANT 7, HOVERING LOW OVER THE RAD LAKE.
EXCELLENT.
AND WHAT WAS THEIR HEADING AFTERWARDS?
DID YOU FOLLOW PROTOCOL?
IS THERE A SHIP FOLLOWING THEM THAT WILL RADIO US AT THE INTERVALS WE DISCUSSED?
NO, SIR...
WRAITHS 7, 10 AND 14 WERE SHOT DOWN.
THE DAWN WAS MISSING A PLANE.
I THOUGHT IT WAS AN OPPORTUNE TIME TO ENGAGE.
WE OUTNUMBERED THEM AND--
LIEUTENANT, WHY WOULD NUMBERS MATTER?
IF I WANTED THEM DESTROYED I WOULD GET IN MY PLANE AND SHOOT THEM DOWN MYSELF.
HOWEVER, MY ORDERS WERE TO NOT ENGAGE.
YOU ARE TRAINED TO PILOT THOSE PLANES AND FOLLOW MY ORDERS.

YOUR INABILITY TO FOLLOW ORDERS LOST US PLANES, WHICH ARE NOT REPLACEABLE.
KA-KRINK
CRUNCH!
IRK.
PILOTS WHO TAKE YEARS TO TRAIN.
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, YOU LOST TRACK OF THE DAWN.
DR. STEPHENS, YOU MAY COME IN NOW.
HNGGG...
THIS IS WHY I AM PUNISHING YOU.
I HAVE TO OR THERE WILL BE NO ORDER.
YOU UNDER-STAND?
NEXT TIME FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS. INTEGRITY OF COMMAND IS WHAT KEEPS US ALIVE.
DOCTOR, PLEASE TAKE LIEUTENANT RYALL AWAY.
HE HAS BEEN WOUNDED.
UHNNN...
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
I INJURED HIS STOMACH, DOCTOR.
IF HE SURVIVES, HE CAN STILL BE AN EFFECTIVE PILOT.
NOW, PLEASE HURRY.
WE'VE ALREADY POSSIBLY LOST THE MEANS OF OUR SALVATION AND THREE GOOD PILOTS TODAY.
LET'S NOT MAKE IT FOUR.
END CHAPTER ONE

NEXT MONTH!
WILD BLUE YONDER

EMPIRE
K6